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Letter dated 19 April 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In response to Israel's letters dated 2 and 3 April 2002 (A/56/898-S/2002/345 and A/56/899-S/2002/348), which contain the customary allegations, sophistries and fabrications, we should like to state as follows:

1. The assertion that Hizbullah's attacks on Israeli occupation outposts are "unprovoked" is inadmissible and singular inasmuch as occupation in itself is aggression and provocation. In successive reports on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi A. Annan, has also characterized Israel's daily violations of Lebanon's sovereignty in the air, on the ground and at sea as acts of provocation.

2. The Lebanese Shab`a farmlands are, by Israel's own admission, occupied territory. According to the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Organization, especially General Assembly resolution 46/51 of 9 December 1991, peoples have the right to struggle for the restoration of occupied territory. A distinction must therefore be made between the actions of Hizbullah against the Israeli occupation and international terrorism, including the State terrorism in which Israel engages and which Lebanon condemns in the strongest terms. Israel's endeavour to link acts of legitimate resistance with the substance of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) is therefore a shameless attempt to justify its manifestly aggressive intentions with regard to Lebanon.

3. In connection with certain incidents that have recently taken place in southern Lebanon outside the Lebanese Shab`a farmlands area, the Lebanese Minister of Defence has stated that, while affirming the right and duty of the Lebanese Government, the resistance and the people to liberate the Shab`a farmlands using all legitimate means, the Lebanese Government is committed to keeping the situation along the Blue Line from Naqurah to the Shab`a farmlands under control. The Lebanese security forces deployed in the South have reinforced their ground patrols and have succeeded in arresting a number of non-Lebanese armed elements who brought in and launched three rockets while acting alone and outside the framework

of the resistance formula to which Lebanon adheres, namely that of liberating that part of Lebanese territory that remains under Israeli occupation.

4. Hizbullah is a Lebanese political party that is represented in the National Assembly and participated actively in the liberation of the greater part of Lebanon's South from Israeli occupation.

5. Instead of pressure being brought to bear on Hizbullah, as the Israeli letters suggest, for acts of resistance to occupation to be halted Israel must withdraw from the territory it is occupying by force in the Shab'a farmlands and from all the occupied Arab territories in accordance with the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

6. While affirming its legitimate right to complete the liberation of those parts of its territory that are occupied by Israel, Lebanon renews its commitment to a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the Madrid formula and the principle of land for peace, which was endorsed at the Arab Summit Conference held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002 and in the Beirut Declaration and the final communiqué of the Summit containing the Arab peace initiative.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 42, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Houssam Asaad **Diab**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.